

## DRAFT

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To: MS(C)

From:

NR

Clearance:

Stuart Miller, Direct of Adult  
Social Care (Delivery)

Date:

12 November 2020

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NR

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### SUBMISSION TITLE

<b>Issue</b>	You asked for advice following the publication of the Social Care Working Group update paper, which included advice on PPE for unpaid carers. This submission is a follow up to the update we provided on 15 October and provides further information on distribution options.
<b>Timing</b>	<b>Routine (five working days)</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>That you:</p> <p><b>Agree</b> that we amend DHSC guidance to advise that PPE should be worn by unpaid carers when providing personal care to someone they do not live with.</p> <p><b>Agree</b> that we implement a staggered rollout, allowing us to identify and deliver the most effective approach (both logistically and from a supply perspective) of providing free PPE to unpaid carers via Local Authorities (LAs)/ Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), supported by voluntary organisations.</p> <p><b>Agree</b> that we allow LAs discretion when distributing free PPE, and provide guidelines about the type of carers who should be prioritised.</p>

### Discussion

1. Based on the 2011 census there are around 5.4 million unpaid carers in England<sup>1</sup>; however estimates which use more recent data put the number of unpaid carers at around 7.7 million.<sup>2</sup> Unpaid care is fundamental to the sustainability of the health and social care system. During the pandemic, unpaid carers have been invaluable to the health and social care sector, preventing people from entering formal care for preventable conditions; absorbing/reducing strain and burden on the NHS; and providing care and support for those they care for, in their own homes.

<sup>1</sup> 2011 census

<sup>2</sup> Health Survey England 2015, 2017 and ONS 2020 Population Projections

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2. The DHSC guidance for unpaid carers in England does not currently recommend that unpaid carers need to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when providing care, unless advised to do so by a healthcare professional. In May 2020 Public Health England (PHE) advised that extra-resident carers (carers not living with the person they care for) should wear PPE if providing personal care. They also recommended that co-resident carers (those living with the person they care for) should wear PPE if the cared-for individual is symptomatic with COVID-19. You agreed with our recommendation (with support from DCMO) that the guidance should not change because of the rate and risk of transmission at that time and supply constraints. At this point we outlined that we had sought further advice from SAGE on the effectiveness of PPE in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in those delivering care within the same parameters as unpaid carers, to support a further review of the policy.
3. We recently updated you on the findings of the SAGE Social Care Working Group (Note attached at Annex A), which advised that:
  - a. unpaid extra-resident carers should follow the same PPE procedures recommended for domiciliary care workers.<sup>3</sup>
  - b. PPE should be made available for co-resident unpaid carers who wish to utilise it, while acknowledging the impracticalities of co-residents wearing PPE at all times.

We need to respond to this clinical advice but there are a number of challenges - both in terms of likely demand, and distribution. Therefore this submission proposes a trial in five local authorities of a free PPE offer for unpaid carers who provide care to someone they don't live with.

### Current position

4. In the Winter Plan, the Government committed to free PPE for Covid-19 needs for Adult Social Care providers, including domiciliary care providers, until March 2021. There isn't currently a national offer of free PPE for unpaid carers in England; however, some LAs have chosen to provide it, including in Liverpool and Birmingham. Many unpaid carers undertake tasks similar to domiciliary care workers, including personal care tasks such as washing or toileting. CarersUK's report 'Caring behind closed doors' published in October indicates that unpaid carers have been providing even more care during the pandemic, and many have struggled due to the closure of local services. The report also states that 1.2 million carers were living in poverty prior to the pandemic.<sup>4</sup>
5. Separately you have asked us to make preparations to supply PPE for visitors to enable safe visiting of care homes after the lockdown. This would complement our plans to provide PPE to unpaid carers, helping to protect carers and those they care for from Covid-19 in a wider range of settings. We have developed assumptions on the effective use of PPE for visitors under different scenarios. We have tested these with the SAGE care working group, and with PHE. Based

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<sup>3</sup> The current guidance to domiciliary care workers is that full PPE (type IIR mask, apron, gloves, eye protection if risk of droplets) should be worn when providing personal care, or if coming within 2m of someone who has a cough. When in a client's home, a type II mask should be worn if coming within 2m of the cared-for person, or a Type I or II if not.

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Y., Bennett M.R. and Yeandle S. (2020) Caring & COVID-19: Hunger and mental wellbeing. Sustainable Care: Care Matters 2020/01, CIRCLE, University of Sheffield, Carers UK

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on the expert advice, we will work with the ASC visitors team to prepare updated guidance, and the PPE demand and Ops teams to model demand and agree the appropriate supply logistics to support a national rollout in December. We will send up a submission next week to update you on our approach.

### Likely demand from unpaid carers

6. Data on unpaid carers, including how many there are, the types of activities they do and whether they are extra-resident/co-resident, is limited. Our best estimates suggest that there could be as many as 7.7 million unpaid carers in this country (as set out in detail at Annex B). Clearly providing all of these carers with PPE would be unfeasible from a stock, supply and distribution perspective.
7. It is unclear how many unpaid carers would take up an offer of PPE. Currently, Liverpool regularly provide approximately 8 unpaid carers with PPE, out of an estimated 52,000 unpaid carers<sup>5</sup>. In Birmingham, where unpaid carers can apply for free PPE if they provide personal care to someone who lives in a different household, PPE has been provided to approximately 20 unpaid carers out of approximately 1500 who are registered as providing extra-resident unpaid care on their database.<sup>6</sup> Feedback from Scotland and Wales has similarly shown that actual demand has been far lower than that which was modelled. We don't know what the impact of a national offer would be on take up but can assume that not every unpaid carer would want PPE.
8. In the Devolved Authorities (DAs) and Local Authorities (LAs) who are already providing PPE to unpaid carers, lower take-up is partly explained by the prioritisation criteria that have been applied. For example, Scotland and Sefton LA provide free PPE to unpaid carers who are unable to access it through normal routes. In Wales, free PPE is additionally available to "shielders", or to individuals who are providing close personal care to someone who is symptomatic. Liverpool provide free PPE to unpaid carers who provide personal care to someone in another household, or non personal care to someone in a different household who, as per PHE guidance, is considered clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.
9. Demand in some of these areas has been further reduced by the provision of advice such as hand hygiene, and a discussion about whether the task being undertaken is considered personal care and requires close contact.
10. To try to understand likely demand for a new offer, we propose to run a short trial in five LAs in areas with good carer networks, high prevalence (particularly amongst older people) and a mix of rural and urban locations. We could assume that in areas with good carer networks take-up would be highest, giving us an upper limit for demand. For this trial, we propose to test the following:
  - a. An offer of free PPE to those unpaid carers who provide personal care to people who live outside their home

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<sup>5</sup> Figure provided by Liverpool LA

<sup>6</sup> This is estimated to be around 1.5% of the total number of extra-resident carers in the Birmingham area